LESSON-6

The Guidance Given Along His Arduous Trek

The Buddha's health was deteriorating with each passing day. This was his final journey; each step brought him closer to his final resting place, but he remained focused on teaching Dhamma until the very end. All along his arduous trek from Rājagaha to Kushinagar, he frequently reminded the monks to strive on for their spiritual accomplishment (i.e., the fulfillment of morality, concentration and wisdom).

(1) *Atha kho, Bhagavā—Rājagahe yathā-bhirantaṃ viharitvā—Āyasmantaṃ Ānandaṃ āmantesi,"ĀyāmĀnanda, yena Ambalaṭṭhikā, tenupasaṃkamissāmā"ti. "Evaṃ bhante"ti kho āyasmā Ānando Bhagavato paccassosi.*

And when the Lord had stayed at Rājagaha as long as he wished, he said to the Venerable Ananda: 'Come, Ananda, let us go to Ambalatthikā.' 'Very good, Lord', said Ananda,

And then ( ), the Blessed One—having stayed ( ) at Rājagaha ( ) as long as he wished ( )—said to the Venerable Ānanda ( ): 'Come Ānanda ( ), let us approach ( ) there ( ) where Ambalatthikā ( ).' 'Very good, sir ( ),' replied Ānanda ( )

(2) *Atha kho, Bhagavā mahatā bhikkhu-saṃghena saddhiṃ yena Ambalaṭṭhikā tadavasari. Tatra sudaṃ Bhagavā Ambalaṭṭhikāyaṃ viharati rājāgārake. Etadeva bahulaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ dhammiṃ kathaṃ karoti.*

And the Lord went there with a large company of monks. And the Lord stayed in the royal park at Ambalatthikā, and there he delivered a comprehensive discourse:

And then ( ), the Blessed One ( ) together with a large monk-group ( ) went down there ( ) where Ambalatthikā ( ). There ( ) the Blessed One ( ) stayed in Ambalatthikā, a royal park ( ). He gave this very dhamma talk ( ) frequently ( ) to the monks ( ).

(3) *"Iti sīlaṃ; iti samādhi; iti paññā. Sīla-paribhāvito samādhi maha-pphalo hoti mahā-nisaṃso. Samādhi-paribhāvitā paññā maha-pphalā hoti mahā-nisaṃsā. Paññā-paribhāvitaṃ cittaṃ sammadeva āsavehi vimuccati, seyyathidaṃ, kāmāsavā bhavāsavā avijjāsavā"ti.*

"This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Concentration, when imbued with morality, brings great fruit and profit. Wisdom, when imbued with concentration, brings great fruit and profit. The mind imbued with wisdom becomes completely free from the corruptions, that is, from the corruption of sensuality, of becoming, of false views and of ignorance."

"Such and such[1] is morality ( ); such and such is concentration ( ); such and such is wisdom ( ). Morality-enhanced concentration ( ) is greatly fruitful and greatly powerful ( ); Concentration-enhanced wisdom ( ) is greatly fruitful and greatly powerful ( ); Wisdom-enhanced mind ( ) is completely free ( ) from the cankers/ intoxications/ flows ( ), namely ( ), the canker of sensual desire ( ), the canker of desire for existence ( ), and the canker of delusion ( )."

[**Note**: According to the commentary, "wisdom" in this sentence refers to the progressive stages of Vipassana insight. And "Wisdom-enhanced mind" refers to the *magga-phala* mind.]

The observation of moral conduct serves as a necessary foundation for the development of concentration. If we are unvirtuous and engage in corruptions or misconducts, our guilty conscience would keep haunting us; we would feel anxious and guilty, leaving no or little room for concentration. In the worst-case scenario, our immoral conduct may lead to legal punishment or even suicide. On the other hand, by observing moral conduct, we can live a life with clear conscience and calm mind that is greatly conducive to the concentration (i.e., stable and tranquil state of mind). In this sense, the Buddha said: "Concentration—enhanced by morality—is greatly beneficial and fruitful." Variety

As for the development of wisdom (i.e., vipassana insight), concentration is a necessary foundation. Having no concentration, thinking about the past or future, we can't focus on the present phenomena concurrently. Then, there would be no room

[1] According to the context, the "***iti***" here connotes both variety (*pakāra*) and verification (*avadhārṇa*), as in the case of "*iti rūpaṃ; iti rūpassa samudayo*." Therefore, it is here translated as "such and such."

for wisdom (vipassana insight) to arise. In a secular school, for example, if our mind is wandering around, we can't catch up what the teaching is teaching in the classroom. So, without concentration, we cannot even gain mundane knowledge, not to mention vipassana insight that requires stronger concentration to see psychophysical phenomena as they really are. So, only through concentration can wisdom (vipassana insight) be developed effectively. That is why the Buddha said: "Wisdom (vipassana insight)—enhanced by concentration—is greatly beneficial and fruitful."

As for the development of magga-phala mind, the wisdom (vipassana insight) is the necessary foundation. For elaboration, the magga-phala mind can only be attained by developing two kinds of vipassana insight: the empirical insight (*paccakkha-vipassana*) and the inferential insight (*anumāna-vipassana*). We have to develop the empirical insight by observing our own present phenomena. As for the inferential insight, we don't need to develop it deliberately because it arises inferring from the empirical insight by contemplating all kinds of phenomena in general, whether past or future, our own or anybody else's. Twelve progressive stages of insight (each in two forms, empirical and inferential) culminate in the magga-phala enlightenment. So, wisdom (vipassana insight) is the necessary foundation for the magga-phala mind, indeed. That is why the Buddha said: "The magga-phala mind—enhanced by wisdom (vipassana insight)—is totally liberated from all kinds of cankers (*āsava*)."